



What's Driving Your Decisions?

By Sara Caputo, MA

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In the world of getting more organized, I often educate clients, groups and all people that will listen to me, that organization is about much more than just buying cool containers and moving stuff around. It's really about making better, faster and smarter decisions.

All of your clutter, piles and accumulation come from one of two things:

1. Lack of decisions
2. Lack of a system

The two work hand-in-hand because it's impossible to make a decision about something or where something will go if there is no designated place for it. For example, the mail comes in and gets plopped into a pile with yesterdays mail... the same thing happens all week and come Friday, there is a large pile of mail waiting for..... YOU to make a decision about where it needs to go. That's all it needs. It doesn't need a beautiful basket or a bin (although those will help down the road), it simply needs your attention and decision-making ability. However, this is virtually impossible and totally understandable that it stays sitting in the pile, because there is nowhere that has been designated for it to go, hence a system is missing.

Many people find the decision making part of getting organized the most challenging. The reason being is that when decisions are made, thoughts need to be clear, priorities need to be clear, and time needs to be set aside. All things that are in short supply when life is moving at 100 miles per hour around you. What ends up happening is that no decisions get made and then stacks and piles get bigger, file drawers don't get looked at and overwhelm and anxiety sets in. Not looking at piles and going through them is also a decision. It's just not the one that we're going for here.

Then, it happens. Fear becomes the driving force behind your decisions. Or, rather, fear of the unknown. I see it all the time... people invite me into their lives because they haven't opened up their file cabinets in over a year and they have no idea what is living inside and what they might be faced with when they open them up.

In order to be in control versus out of control with our systems, we have to get really clear on where things will live and create systems that support our way of being in the world. These can and should be extremely simple. I'm talking like Elementary School simple.

Cornerstones include:

1. Grouping like with like
2. Creating homes and zones for each area of the office or house
3. Working in concentric circles.

Concentric circles means that you keep close to you what you need and use most often and work outward from that point. I was working with a manager at a large corporation recently on general paper organization and as we were going through the papers, deciding what to keep and what to toss, he realized that he keeps nearly everything that he uses and needs in the credenza behind him that he has to get up to get to and of course the drawers and file drawers near him were full of other goodies that he rarely needed. In making this one shift, he was able to identify very quickly where things needed to go, just based on the idea of working in concentric circles.

So, when you are faced with decisions, stick with the cornerstones of organization to help you in making smarter, faster and wiser decisions. This way, you will be creating systems that are based on purpose and clarity, which will work for you on a deeper level in your life.

About the Author

Sara Caputo, MA is a productivity and organizing consultant who has been streamlining environments and simplifying lives for years through consulting, coaching, and training. Sara is the owner of Radiant Organizing, a professional organizing & consulting company, based in Santa Barbara, California.

She is passionate and dedicated to helping people create more space in their lives for the things they love. Sara's commitment, intuition, and facilitative approach to organizing has helped numerous businesses and individuals pave their way towards living more productive and balanced lives. She believes that by creating more order in our lives and eliminating unnecessary chaos, we can participate more fully in all levels of life!